Preparatory Committee for the 2005 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons

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Implementation of article VI of the NPT, taking into account the conclusions in the final document of the 2000 Review Conference and paragraph 4 (c) of the 1995 principles and objectives

Report submitted by the Netherlands

Introduction

1. In this paper, the Netherlands will give a substantive report of the steps undertaken by the Netherlands in the implementation of article VI and paragraph 4© of the 1995 Principles and Objectives. As the most recent elaboration of the obligations embodied in article VI and the Principles and Objectives is contained in the 13 steps of the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference, this report will focus on these practical steps. In doing so the Netherlands will inform the PrepCom of the implementation by the Netherlands of *those* steps related to nuclear disarmament, for which also non-nuclear weapon states bear responsibility. It is clear that only the nuclear weapon states bear a special responsibility for implementing all steps.

Step 1: the CTBT

2. The Netherlands has worked toward entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) in two ways: by actively supporting the work of the CTBTO-PrepCom in Vienna in implementing the Treaty's verification mechanism and by promoting signature and/or ratification of the CTBT. The Netherlands belonged to the group of original co-sponsors of the Ministerial Declaration on the early entry-into-force of the CTBT, issued on September 14, 2002 at the Ministerial Part of the 57th United Nations General Assembly. The Netherlands furthermore participated in the efforts undertaken in the framework of the European Union to achieve early entry into force of this treaty through diplomatic demarches in non-signatory and non-ratifying countries. The Netherlands participated actively in the Art. XIV Conference in 2003. The Conference decided, inter alia, to create the function of a Special Representative to further promote the entry into force of the Treaty. Ambassador Jaap Ramaker of The Netherlands was subsequently appointed as Special Representative. The Government of The Netherlands will provide financial assistance to the Special Representative to fulfil his task.

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Step 2: Test moratorium

3. Although strictly speaking a step to be taken by the Nuclear Weapon States, it is clear that pending entry into force of the CTBT, test moratoria gain in importance. That is why for the Netherlands insistence on a test moratorium is part and parcel of our diplomatic efforts promoting the Test Ban Treaty.

Step 3: FMCT-negotiations

4. The Netherlands has supported several initiatives that could provide the basis for a work programme in the Conference on Disarmament (CD), in particular the initiative of the so-called Five Ambassadors, and that subsequently could lead to the immediate commencement of negotiations leading to a treaty to stop the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices (FMCT). The Netherlands will continue to apply maximum flexibility in the discussions on a work program of the CD, which should finally allow these negotiations to really start.

5. In the meantime, the Netherlands has remained active in relation to the issue of fissile material, in order to try to implement the agreement reached at both the 1995 and 2000 NPT-conferences on this important next multilateral step on the road to nuclear disarmament. For this reason, the Netherlands initiated an FMCT-exercise in Geneva of a series of open-ended informal meetings of an informative and educational nature on the issue of fissile material for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. The purpose of this exercise is to better prepare delegations in Geneva for the actual negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament on an FMCT. Since the last PrepCom in April 2002, the Netherlands has organised six meetings on various relevant topics: the relevance of an FMCT for nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, the scope of an FMCT, the relation between IAEA-safeguards and an FMCT, and stockpiles of fissile material. Reports of these meetings have been circulated as official documents of the CD. The Netherlands will continue this FMCT-exercise as long as the negotiations have not commenced.

Step 4: Nuclear disarmament in the CD

6. Once the CD has agreed upon a Program of Work, attention should also be given to nuclear disarmament. The proposal to establish a subsidiary body in the CD to deal with this subject was originally made by a group of states including the Netherlands.

Step 5: Irreversibility

7. Irreversibility is important for multilateral and bilateral arms control alike. Although *agreeing* on bilateral nuclear arms reductions is primarily the responsibility of the nuclear weapon states, international stability and security are best served by *irreversible* reductions. It has been a consistent element in the approach of the Netherlands towards nuclear reduction talks to emphasise the importance of irreversibility. The Netherlands therefore welcomes that SORT-Treaty in which reductions of strategic offensive nuclear weapons has been laid down in a legally binding document. This in itself promotes irreversibility. The Netherlands welcomes the entry into force of this treaty.

Step 6: The unequivocal undertaking

8. The Netherlands considers the unequivocal undertaking by the Nuclear Weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals leading to nuclear disarmament, to which all States Parties are committed under Article VI, as one of the major achievements of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. While acknowledging the Nuclear Weapon States for the steps they have taken so far to reduce their nuclear arsenals (both by dismantling nuclear weapons as by destruction of fissile material and closing down production facilities), the Netherlands has been encouraging the Nuclear weapon States to further continue their efforts in this respect.

Step 7: START and the ABM-treaty

9. Strictly speaking, START and the ABM-Treaty are a bilateral issue, but of course it is of interest to the whole NPT-community. The Netherlands believes that in looking at the implementation of this step we should take the changed international circumstances into account. Instead of focussing on the demise of the ABM-Treaty we must look to the future. The Netherlands is encouraged by the new Strategic Framework that has been negotiated between the Russian Federation and the United States, and the prominent place strategic nuclear reductions take therein, building on the START-process. We will continue to argue for measures regarding verification, transparency, predictability and irreversibility to form part of any ensuing agreement.

Step 8: The Trilateral Initiative

10. The Netherlands has been encouraging the Trilateral parties - the Russian Federation, the United States and the IAEA - to conclude and implement the Trilateral Initiative. This Initiative is an important contribution in enhancing confidence and trust, and should be used in full.

Step 9: International stability and undiminished security

11. The implementation of the steps as part of overall step 9 is the main responsibility of the Nuclear Weapon States. Nevertheless, on two elements of these steps - accountability and transparency, and non-strategic nuclear weapons – The Netherlands has always emphasised the importance: in the UN, the CD, and the NPT and during bilateral discussions on nuclear disarmament.

12. The Netherlands has been strongly advocating increasing accountability and transparency with regard to nuclear arsenals. At the last NPT-Review Conference in 2000, the Netherlands introduced proposals in this respect, together with Belgium, Germany, Italy and Norway. Regarding transparency, according to the original proposals, such measures could include a commitment by the NWS to provide periodically the aggregate numbers of warheads, delivery systems, stocks of fissile material for military purposes in their possession and their nuclear policies. Some of the Nuclear Weapon States have already allowed for a good degree of transparency. It is the sincere hope of the Netherlands that these states will further their efforts in being transparent regarding their nuclear arsenals. The Netherlands would like to call on the other nuclear weapon states to also become more transparent on their nuclear arsenals.

13. But transparency on nuclear issues not only applies to the "haves"; it also applies to the "have-nots". Comprehensive safeguards (INFCIRC/153) constitute a bare minimum. Concluding additional safeguards (INFCIRC/540) with the IAEA is also an important way of being transparent. The Netherlands has done so. We urge all those States that have not yet signed or ratified such an Additional Protocol to do so without delay.

14. We also believe that the reduction of warheads and non-strategic nuclear weapons should take place in a transparent and irreversible way. Increased transparency with regard to tactical or non-strategic nuclear weapons could be a first step and would be an important CBM.

15. As party to the NPT and as a member of NATO, we feel a special responsibility in relation to the issue of non-strategic nuclear weapons. Since the end of the Cold War, NATO has significantly reduced the numbers of tactical nuclear weapons in its arsenal. What remains deployed in Europe is only a very small amount of the original numbers that were there 10 or more years ago. More than 80 percent of these weapons were actually eliminated. Their readiness is presently measured in weeks and months rather than in hours and days. The purpose of NATO's remaining non-strategic nuclear weapons is fundamentally political. Within NATO, a process has started between the Alliance and the Russian Federation to give appropriate attention to the question of non-strategic nuclear weapons. The dialogue, which is now starting will hopefully lead to measures that will promote mutual confidence, transparency and stability.

16. The Netherlands has, together with Belgium and Norway submitted a document (NPT/CONF.2005/PC.II/WP.17) at the 2nd PrepCom of the NPT which is meant to support and assist the Chairs of the 3rd PrepCom session and ultimately of the 2005 RevCon, in their efforts to reach consensus language on a number of relevant issues. Some countries concerned were already invited to make additional comments and further develop substantive elements of the document, as orally stated by the authors at the 2nd PrepCom session. The initiators welcome other interested parties to contribute to the document and/or cosponsor the document at this (3rd) PrepCom.

Step 11: general and complete disarmament

17. The Netherlands continues to be active on almost all non-nuclear arms control and disarmament issues: biological weapons, chemical weapons, missiles, landmines, explosive remnants of war and small arms and light weapons.

Step 12: reporting

18. This report constitutes the fulfilment of the Netherlands with this obligation.

Step 13: development of verification

19. On the development of verification capabilities to assure "compliance with nuclear disarmament agreements for the achievement and maintenance of a nuclear-weapon-free world", as step 13 puts it, the Netherlands participated in various seminars and discussions.